UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/CONF.85/L.81
22 July 1992

ENGLISH ONLY

SIXTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE
ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
New York, 25 August-3 September 1992
Item 11 (a) of the provisional agenda*

WRITING SYSTEMS AND GUIDES TO PRONUNCIATION: ROMANIZATION

Modification of romanized transcription of Thai

Paper submitted by Thailand**

---

* E/CONF/85/1/Rev.1.

** Prepared by Prasong Chingchai, Royal Thai Survey Department, Thailand.

92-33442 3270c (E) 310792 050892 /...

1. INTRODUCTION

The Royal Thai Government has adopted and employed the General System of transcription of the Royal Institute for use in transcribing geographical names within Thailand since 1939. In the General System the sound of words is indicated not only by Roman alphabets but also with the diacritical markings. The mentioned system provides only an approximate pronunciation for non - Thai speakers. This system after having some modification has been also adopted as the international system for the Romanization of Thai geographical names by the United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names which held in 1967. Then the application of this system has been used for the official bilingual map of Thailand and other documents as well. The transcription of Thai geographical names into Roman characters is actually intended to enable foreigners to pronounce the names as closely as possible to the Thai sound. The modified General System of transcription is shown in Tables 1 - 2

2. PROBLEMS OF THE EXISTING TRANSCRIPTION SYSTEM

The above - mentioned General System of transcription has been applied for geographical names including street, railway station, and place names throughout the country. The Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Education, and Universities Affairs also use this system for personal names in English text-books, and official documents such as passports and registration matters. The National Library uses it for bibliographic work. With more use of the system more confusion is revealed.

All the English language newspapers in Thailand and some private sector seem to ignore this system and have invented their own. People in general choose whatever system they prefer or no system at all. Some scholars proposed new system claiming that their new systems are in accordance with the Thai phonetic system or Thai common sense.

3. IMPROVEMENT TO THE ROMANIZED TRANSCRIPTION OF THAI

The Royal Institute has always been aware of the problems. And the Institute has considered this system has been created for a long time. At present the need to transcribe Thai sounds and words into Roman alphabets is increasing. The Romanized transcription of Thai is not only to enable foreigners to read geographical names but also for the international interchange of data by computerized system. The existing system, which is oriented to pronunciation, is not

convenient to use because one Roman character represents several Thai vowels or consonants, and it cannot be converted back into the original Thai. Therefore on 24 December 1985. The Thai Romanization Improvement Committee has been appointed by Government to handle the improvement of Romanization of Thai scripts. The Committee finally concluded that the requirements shall be devided into two separate topics because of there are different purposes of using. They are transliteration and transcription. The first one is a means of converting the Thai writing system into Roman alphabet. Thus it is a two - way conversion system where pronunciation is ignored. This paper will put emphasis on the transcription or the second one.

By transcription, it is assumed that a Thai word is transcribed into Roman alphabets representing the right pronunciation. It was decided that since this Romanized transcription system will be used by general public, a la the Royal Institute General System, it should be repreented by the 26 Roman characters only. There will be no marking of tones or of quantities of vowels, i.e. no distinction between " short " and " long " vowels. In conclusion, the new Royal Institute General System then has only been modified some vowel sounds which based on phonetic logic, the consonant sounds still be the same as the existing system. This means that the Thai consonant sounds have no

inprovement or any modification owing to they still be suitable in employing and people were accustomed to transcribed them. Eventhough there are some consonants should be modified to use another Roman alphabet which based on phonetic logic better than the existing one. It can be seen that this newly modified transcription solves certain ambiguities caused by the use of the same Roman character for more than one Thai vowel sound especially diphthong sounds. It could hopefully be applied much better than the existing one. The newly modified Romanized transcription of Thai is shown in Tables 3-4. Comparison between the two systems, old and new, can be seen in Table 5.

This newly modified Romanized transcription of geographical names from Thai characters into Roman letters is submited to this Conference to consider and adopt as the international system for the Romanization of Thai geographical names instead of the former one.

MODIFIED GENERAL SYSTEM OF TRANSCRIPTION FOR VOWELS

VOWELS	
Thai	Roman
-ะ -ั -า	a
-ำ	am
ิ ี	i
ึ ื ุ -, -ู	u
เ-ะ เ็ เ-	e
แ-ะ แ-	ae
โ-ะ โ- เ-าะ -อ	o
เ-อะ เ-อ เ็	oe
เ็อะ เ็อ	ia
เ็อะ เ็อ ็วะ ็ว -ว	ua
ไ- ไ- ็ว ไ-ย -าย	ai
เ-า -าว	ao
ุ้ -	ui
ไ-อ -อย	oi
ิว	iu
เ็า เ-า	eo
เ-อ	oei
เ็อย -าย	uai
แ-า	aeo
เ็อา	ieo

Remark : - = ฺ

TABLE 1

/...

MODIFIED GENERAL SYSTEM FOR CONSONANTS

CONSONANTS		
Thai	Roman	
	Initial	Final
ก	k	k
ข ฃ ค	kh	k
ง	ng	ng
จ	ch	t
ฉ ช ฌ	ch	t
ญ	y	n
ฎ ฏ ฑ (when pronounced d)	d	t
ฐ ฒ	t	t
ณ ฤ ฦ ท ธ น	th	t
บ ม	n	n
ป	b	p
ผ	p	p
ฝ พ ฟ	ph	p
ภ ฟ	f	p
ม	m	m
ย	y	-
ร	r	n
ล ฬ	l	n
ว	w	-
ศ ษ ส ห ฬ	s	t
ห ฮ	h	-

TABLE 2

/...

ROMANIZED TRANSCRIPTION OF THAI

Thai Vowels	Transcription	Examples
อะ อะลดรูป อ้ อา	a	- กะ = ka - ถลา = thala - วัง = wang - ป่า = pa
อำ	am	- ลำ = lam
อิ อี	i	- กิน = kin - มิด = mit
อึ อื	ue	- บึง = bueng - ปืน = puen
อุ อู	u	- ขุด = khut - ลูก = luk
เอะ เอ็ เอ	e	- เตะ = te - เย็น = yen - เจ = che
แอะ แอ็ แอ	ae	- และ = lae - แข็ง = khaeng - แดง = daeng
โอะ โอะลดรูป โอ เอาะ ออ ็ (ก็)	o	- โต๊ะ = to - คน = khon - โจร = chon - เงาะ = ngo - พ่อ = pho - ก็ = ko
เออะ เออ เอิ	oe	- เลอะ = loe - เผลอ = phloe - เดิน = doen
เอียะ เอีย	ia	- เกี๊ยะ = kia - เปีย = pia
เอือะ เอือ	uea	- เรือ = ruea

Table 3

Thai Vowels	Transcription	Examples
อัวะ อัว -ว	ua	- ผัวะ = phua - บัว = bua - ทวน = thuan
ไอ ไอ อัย ไอย อาย	ai	- ใจ = chai - ไก่ = kai - วัย = wai - ไทย = thai - ควาย = khwai
เอา อาว	ao	- เหล้า = lao - ข้าว = khao
อุย อูย	ui	- ทุย = thui - อูย = ui
โอย อ็อย ออย	oi	- โดย = doi - ผลอย = phloi - คอย = doi
เอย	oei	- เลย = loei
เอือย	ueai	- เฉื่อย = chueai
อวย	uai	- รวย = ruai
อิว	io	- ปลิว = plio
เอ็ว เอว	eo	- เร็ว = reo - เหว = heo
แอ็ว แอว	aeo	- แผล็ว = phlaeo - แมว = maeo
เอียว	iao	- เหี่ยว = hiao
ฤ (รึ) ฤา	rue	- ฤดี = ruedi
ฤ (ริ)	ri	- ฤทธิ์ = rit
ฤ (เรอ)	roe	- ฤกษ์ = roek
ฦ ฦา	lue	- ฦาชา = luecha

Table 3

ROMANIZED TRANSCRIPTION OF THAI

The consonants	Initial	Final
ก	k	k
ข ฃ ค ฅ ฆ	kh	k
ง	ng	ng
จ ฉ ช ฌ	ch	t
ญ	y	n
ด ฎ ฑ (ออกเสียง "ด")	d	t
ต ฏ	t	t
ถ ฐ ท ฑ (ออกเสียง "ท") ธ ฒ	th	t
น ณ	n	n
บ	b	p
ป	p	p
ผ พ ภ	ph	p
ฝ ฟ	f	p
ม	m	m
ย	y	-
ร	r	n
ล ฬ	l	n
ว	w	-
ซ ทร (ออกเสียง "ซ") ศ ษ ส	s	t
ห ฮ	h	-

Table 4

COMPARISON OF MODIFIED TRANSCRIPTION

Thai Vowels	Old	New	Examples
อึ อือ	u	ue	- บึง = bueng - ปืน = puen
อุ อู	u	u	- ขุด = khut - ลูก = luk
เอือะ เอือ	ua	uea	- เรือ = ruea - เนื้อ = nuea
อัวะ อัว -ว	ua	ua	- ผัวะ = phua - บัว = bua - ทวน = thuan
เอือย	uai	ueai	- เฉื่อย = chueai - เรื่อย = rueai
อวย	uai	uai	- สวย = suai - รวย = ruai
อิว	iu	io	- ปลิว = plio - สิว = sio
เอียว	ieo	iao	- เที่ยว = thiao - เดียว = diao

Table 5